

# From exhalation to inhalation

The experience of human life one could argue, should make it impossible for us to deny that something rather than nothing **is**. This acknowledgment also lays claim on the primal logical truth expressed with the conventional Latin phrase: *ex nihilo nihil fit* (from nothing, nothing proceeds). The implications of this expression invokes the difficult task of solving the problem how eternity can be reconciled with our experience of motion and change.

Eternity opposes every common understanding of change, because eternity cannot initiate a transition of change, because eternity is incompatible with a notion of a beginning of any kind. Instead we have to affirm some speculative apriori principle of 'generation' of change which has always/eternally been active and unchanged. Yet still, we cannot disregard of eternity because it lays claim on an existence relation that binds to an inescapable and undeniable truth, viz, that the first cannot have originated/emanated from another and therefore must be eternal. These logic conclusions when understood together becomes the stopgap that confines every 'emanationist' attempt of making a logically coherent cosmology/cosmogony, (at least in how it can be commonly interpreted and expressed through language [1](#) The problem of eternity simply presents us with the limit, where our habitual modes of thinking in terms of linear causality is non-applicable. Also, the prime eternal being, is indeed immutable and holds the root-condition whereupon every possibility of experiencing any type of life, logically depends. At every turn in our efforts to find a solution, we are faced with the problem to explain precisely what we mean if we hold that eternity and change somehow can have a coexistent actuality. From a monist standpoint, at first glance, the solution to what is often referred to as the one and the many problem is quite simple: There is only one eternal being, and absolutely nothing else.

This is also the basis for understanding the aporetic conclusion in Plato's dialogue Parmenides, namely that if there is a one, everything which in reality can exist and all that has ever existed is a static unchangeable singleness or one. But if we seek a deeper comprehension, we need to meditate on what is meant with the word 'proceeds' in the Latin phrase, which we should not make synonymous with an idea of 'emanation' or 'creation' by thinking that what has emanated from the eternal somehow would have a being separated from that which gave rise to it or that it began at some arbitrary point in time.

The word 'proceeds' should here rather be linked to a cyclic outward and inward movement or: progression<->retrogression [2](#) . which is 'happening' perpetually at the speed of light [3](#) But the notion of progression and its inverse retrogression will here also be considered from the perspective of astronomical time-cycles or aeons. Here we will link the concept of the platonic great year and the nuptial number whereby a full cycle consisting of lesser cycles together spans over a period of 36000 years.

it is precisely this **transition problem** which is both the justification of monism but also poses a logical enigma that the monist metaphysician needs to solve.

The transition argument/problem is concisely formulated by Proclus 4th argument for the eternity of the world:

Each thing generated from a cause that is unmoved according to its substantial reality is unmoved. 1 For if the maker is unmoved, he is unchanged, and if unchanged, then he produces by virtue of his very being, given that he shifts neither from making to not making nor from not making to making. 2 For if he shifts, he will experience change in the very transition from the one to the other, and were he to experience change, he would not be unmoved. If therefore something is unmoved, it will either never make or always make; otherwise, whenever it does make, it would be moved. Consequently, 3 if something unmoved is a cause of something, causing neither never nor sometimes, then it is always a cause, and if so, it is a cause of something eternal. ~If the cause of the all is unmoved/i-for were it moved, it would be earlier incomplete and later complete (since every motion is incomplete actuality)' and furthermore would need time to bring time into being then the all must be eternal, because it comes to be from an unmoved cause. Consequently, if someone, intending to pay respect to the cause of the all, should say that the cause alone is eternal and the cosmos is not eternal, then in saying the cosmos is not eternal, he asserts that its cause is moved rather than unmoved. By calling the cause moved rather than unmoved, he says it is not always complete but is at one time incomplete, because every motion is incomplete actuality and so needs something inferior (I mean time) because of its being moved; yet because he says it is sometimes incomplete and not always complete, i.e., needing something inferior, he in fact shows great disrespect.

Proclus - On the Eternity of the World - Argument IV (2001, transl: Helen S. Lang & A.D. Macro)

The first argument for monism comes from seeing that you cannot deny eternity, because you then have no prime locus or ontological ground to state anything at all, and when we acknowledge eternity to be undeniable, the monist will then say that: if you affirm eternity you cannot have first transition or some vague concept of before and after. Inherent in the meaning of Eternity is the aspect of permanence and self-containment, where it becomes futile to think in terms of linear causes. Any idea of 'creation' 'or bringing into existence' whereby something new 'emanates' from what didn't previously exist, also becomes highly problematic. By laying out the logical play-field we are required to operate in, it becomes

clear that the monist needs to be most stringently consistent to address the same problem with which he/she refutes non-monists with.

1 I would for example add Plotinus to this list

2 I have found many different words used to name and explain perhaps different aspects of the same underlying metaphysical understanding. The use of the pair: procession/reversion in E.R. Dodds Translation of Proclus Elements of theology initiated my search to find other articulations. To list a few combinations i have found would be: "Evolution/Involution", "Development/Envelopment/re-absorption", "Outflux/Influx", "Extension/Contraction", although here omitted, perhaps most notably and interesting for its originality and non-recognition is contained in a seminal work in mathematics by Hermann Grassmann who also translated the Rig Vedas from Sanskrit into German, His work contains long sections of a metaphysical character, more specifically I want to highlight the way he describes his algebraic principles of what he terms **an evolution**

*(A new branch of mathematics:the "Ausdehnungslehre" of 1844 and other works;  
Hermann Grassmann;transl: Lloyd C. Kannenberg. 1996)*

3 Here it must also be noted that in order to make less use of unfounded assumptions and truth claims, I say that what I mean with light-speed should be taken analogically and not finally, actually or as a universal truth. But by using the concept of the speed of light as it is theoretically used in the physical sciences, we have the best way of **intellectually and also symbolically** approaching an understanding for many of the concepts that will follow. The first intuition here being that, from the perspective of the physical sciences we say that the speed of light is constant, and that it is principal in that it conditions all our 'scientific' units of quantitative measurement of changing phenomena and we will never be able to empirically study a phenomena undergoing change at this time-resolution. In other words: the rate at which the transitory propagation of light waves "happens" is commonly understood to be the principal constant of change it self, i.e it is the limit of how fast something can change. And if we think quantitatively about duration, we must unavoidably also see that all our empirical units for measuring and observing changing phenomena is dependent on the speed of light.